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SUBJECT: COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ADVANCE TEAM ARRIVES IN
CONAKRY

REF: CONAKRY 667

¶1. (SBU) A four-member advance team arrived in Conakry late last week to lay the groundwork for the UN Commission of Inquiry expected in December. During a November 5 meeting of G-8 representatives in Conakry, UN advance team member Julien Attakla-Ayinon, a Togo-based UN official with the High Commission on Human Rights, told resident Chiefs of Mission that the team's purpose is to secure lodging, offices, vehicles, phones and other requirements for the mission. The team was hoping to rent a building that would offer privacy and discreet entries for confidential visits by witnesses.

¶2. Attakla-Ayinon said the Commission will arrive in Conakry between November 24 and 25, and will spend the next 10 days investigating the September 28 massacre, in presidential guard soldiers opened fire at un-armed pro democracy demonstrators who had gathered inside a soccer stadium, reportedly killing over a 150. Following the shooting, soldier systematically raped an unknown number of women. The Commission will consist of three commissioners named by the UNSYG. They include former Algerian Foreign Minister Mohammed Bedjaoui, and two women, former Burundian minister of solidarity, human rights and gender Kayiramirwa, and Ms. Patten, member of the UN committee for the elimination of discrimination against women.

¶3. The Commission will be supported by a technical staff of 12-14 people, which will include criminal investigators, ballistic experts and others. The Commission is expected to complete its inquiry by December 5. It will then travel to Geneva to draft the its report, which is expected to be delivered to the UNSYG on December 15 or 16. A number of COMs commented that the date is significant since the first anniversary of the coup is December 23.

¶4. (SBU) Attakla-Ayinon said security of the witnesses is a major consideration, and the advanced team is looking to rent vehicles with shaded windows, buy clothing and headgear to conceal the faces of witnesses, and take other precautions. The UN is paying particular attention to the special needs of rape victims, ensuring that their testimony is given in a private setting to women investigators. He added that the UN would likely leave a team behind to ensure that the government does not attempt to identify and retaliate against witnesses once the Commission departs.

¶5. The same commission will also travel to Dakar where a number of rape victims have fled. Attakla-Ayinon said the Commission has written assurances from junta leader Dadis Camara that it will receive the full cooperation of the GoG. Attakla-Ayinon said the Commission will allowed to meet or question anyone it chooses including members of the CNDD, military, and police.

Moller